

# **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM**

*To be proposed to THE WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY CONVENTION on June 5, 2008*

## **PREAMBLE**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** Platform is dedicated to the following beliefs:

We believe it is our duty to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, and to protect the freedom and liberty given to us by our founding fathers. We believe in restoring America to the Constitutional Republic that our forefathers intended. We believe in standing for conservative principles, and in putting people before party.

We believe the strength of our state is in its people. We believe the input and participation of each person are critical to maintaining government which represents and encourages individual initiative and the free enterprise system which has given our nation an economic system second to none.

We believe that good government should guarantee to its individuals equality before the law regardless of race, creed, age, gender, national origin, or income level and that each person's ability, dignity, and freedom, as well as responsibilities, must be recognized and honored.

We believe the foundation of the Republican Party is broad, and, regardless of its position on any particular issue, all Nebraskans are welcomed to join and support Republican philosophy, principles, and candidates.

With these principles, we believe that the **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** is the vehicle for persons who desire a positive and responsive government at the city, county, state, and national levels.

## **AGRICULTURE**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** recognizes agriculture in all its many facets, including farming, ranching, and agribusiness, as Nebraska's primary industry and the cornerstone of its economy.

We believe the agricultural economy must be consistently based in a market-oriented approach. We, however, recognize the potential need for isolated transitional programs that are balanced fairly so as to not adversely affect any single commodity.

We support the establishment of expanded markets as part of a fair and open global marketplace. We recognize that maintaining such a marketplace can require the occasional enforcement of restrictions and the creation of regulations concerning matters such as the labeling of "country of origin" on agricultural products.

We believe in a free and open marketplace functioning in fairness to family farms, ranches, and smaller and independent agribusiness operations, and we encourage the enforcement of state and federal anti-trust laws to their benefit.

We encourage continuing research and development in agricultural products as well as the maintenance and support of research facilities. We further support programs designed to introduce creative agribusiness techniques for the use of agricultural products.

## **CRIME AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** believes the rights of the individual are important and must be protected. We support the work of law enforcement across the state. The judicial system must impose swift and fair punishment for all crimes, violent and non-violent. Alternative punishment and rehabilitation for non-violent offenders should be supported.

### ***Alcohol and Drug Abuse***

The widespread abuse of drugs and the immoderate use of alcohol are threats to all members of society, especially our children. We urge strict enforcement of laws to control and punish those who deal in illegal drugs. We oppose the legalization of marijuana and other controlled substances. We recognize the need to increase the availability of drug and alcohol prevention and rehabilitation.

### ***Capital Punishment***

We support the judicious use of capital punishment and we urge the passage of laws that will limit endless appeals in capital cases.

### ***Pornography***

We oppose pornography in all forms. We recognize the increasing prevalence of pornography in our society from modern technologies, and we urge our elected officials to reexamine our state and federal laws and update them to protect our citizens, especially our children.

### ***Right to Bear Arms***

We support the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Nebraska State Constitution, both of which guarantee the individual right to bear arms. We support the legislature's passage of the law to allow citizens to carry concealed firearms for personal protection and urge the vigorous enforcement of all current gun laws by all levels of government. We urge the legislature to protect this law.

### ***Spouse and Child Abuse***

We encourage our citizens, our elected officials and the courts to fight the growing tragedies of domestic violence and child abuse.

## **DEFENSE**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes the policy of "peace through strength" is essential for both the preservation of America and the promotion of freedom and self-government. The men and women of our armed forces should always be adequately compensated, equipped, and trained to be the finest soldiers in the world. Our greatest asset, the people on whom our security depends, deserves our constant long-term investment in quality, morale and safety. We object to the assignment of women to combat units. We strongly oppose placing the men and women of our armed forces under the command of the United Nations or any other foreign leadership. We support a return to the policy of the United States military to exclude homosexuals as a matter of good order, morale, and discipline. We support the rebuilding of our military and redevelopment and funding of a National Missile Defense system to help preserve and protect the United States and its citizens.

## **THE NATION'S WAR ON TERROR**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* encourages our President to confront and neutralize terrorists and eliminate terrorism throughout the world. We believe our very way of life to be threatened and that the nation should stand united in the face of this evil. We call upon Congress to work with the President to protect our freedom and the citizens of the United States.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* is dedicated to principles of full employment and the creation of economic opportunity for all citizens of Nebraska through the free enterprise system and right to work legislation.

We support aggressive and judicious recruitment and retention of businesses for the state. We support a repeal of the capital gains tax to spur economic development and create jobs. We support the establishment of fair and equitable policies of taxation and the promotion of business expansion. We encourage the use of common sense in both the elimination and enforcement of governmental regulation.

Maintaining necessary infrastructure that would include quality roads and highways, among other essential services, is imperative in fostering economic growth. We support the establishment of enterprise zones in areas where needed to stimulate growth and development. We encourage the promotion of electronic commerce as it facilitates opportunities for economic expansion, especially in rural communities.

High interest rates create problems for the economy and serve as a barrier to economic development. We support national policies to control interest rates consistent with lowering inflation.

Because of its certain devastating affect on our economy we are opposed to the current Cap and Trade legislation and urge senators to vote against it in any and all forms. We are against agencies like the EPA in circumventing the congress by imposing Cap and Trade policies not passed or enacted through legislation.

## **EDUCATION**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** reaffirms the role of education in the development of effective and responsible citizens.

We believe that decisions regarding the education of children properly belong to parents and guardians. We reaffirm our belief that control of all aspects of public education should rest with local school boards, not state or federal agencies. We believe each K-12 student should be provided with the opportunity for an excellent academic education. We believe moral training based on principles established by God, under whom we profess to be a nation, should be returned to its proper and traditional place in the public schools.

We strongly believe that every student has the right to determine his or her future concerning employment and/or profession. This right should not be infringed upon by tracking the student into career paths in the K-12 grades. Federal monies should neither dictate nor affect the student's career decision.

We urge citizens to require fiscal and educational accountability from policy makers, educational institutions and educational professionals to assure that quality services are being rendered. We oppose physical, psychological, inventory or assessment testing without parental consent. We recognize and commend the dedicated educators and administrators who strive to prepare the students for future decision making that will directly affect the freedom and security of the United States.

We encourage patriotism, respect for the American flag and an understanding of our nation's ideals, which make our form of government the best in the world.

We believe the family to be our country's basic institution and as such should be encouraged to take a larger, not smaller, role in education. We support parental choice in education based on a program of vouchers or tax credits, thus creating better education through the principles of free market competition. These alternatives should include private, parochial and home schools.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** affirms our continuing commitment to clean air and water, productive lands, forests, abundant wildlife and responsible stewardship of our God-given natural heritage.

We believe that Nebraska's water is a resource vital to economic health and maintaining a high quality of life. Its preservation is essential and its management should occur on local and state levels and should address the potential of future water shortage. Nebraska's water cannot be considered a saleable resource and must be protected from competing state and federal usage.

We support a pragmatic, effective, and reasonable approach to the protection of our environment. We support streamlining the environmental regulatory system, providing the protection of the environment while still encouraging business profitability and responsible growth. Scientifically sound solutions to environmental problems must be sought through the free market system. We acknowledge each individual's responsibility toward the preservation and enhancement of our environment and remain committed to programs such as recycling and tree planting.

Such policies as those concerning wetlands and endangered species must be balanced between environmental and economic concerns and should not threaten individual property rights.

## **FAMILY**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** affirms the traditional, marriage-based family as the natural and indispensable institution for human development. A society is only as strong as its marriages and families, for the family nurtures those qualities necessary to maintain and advance civilization. We believe no-fault divorce should be limited to situations in which the couple has no children of the marriage. We believe the institution of marriage is crucial to the American family and that marriage should be defined as the legal union of one man and one woman.

We believe America was built on the institutions of home, family, religion, and neighborhood. From these basic-building blocks came self-reliant individuals, prepared to exercise both rights and responsibilities. We oppose laws that would intrude unnecessarily on the rights of the family, contribute to the dissolution of the family, or interfere with parental rights, but we also recognize the need to prevent child and spouse abuse.

We urge Nebraska to continue to remove obstacles to the permanent placement or adoption of foster children in homes offering strong family life based on traditional values.

## **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** believes less **control** is essential to fiscal well being of government at all levels. Government should make a dedicated effort to use tax monies fairly, and public participation in every aspect of the budget process is strongly encouraged and facilitated. We oppose any unfunded mandate by state and federal government. Where appropriate, the private sector should be favored over the public sector.

### ***Federal Government***

We oppose continued expansion of the federal government into our private lives. We encourage our Republican members of congress to continue to fight for a balanced federal budget. We believe that honesty, transparency and truth should be used to formulating a true and balanced budget. Our representatives should continue the work of reducing the size of our federal government.

We oppose using taxpayer money to "bail out" private companies. We believe that experiencing both success and failure are vital and necessary for a free market economy.

We believe in adherence to our system of checks and balances in the federal government, and oppose the President's use of czars and special advisors to circumvent the powers of Congress.

All tax monies not needed to efficiently run the federal government should be returned to all the taxpayers. In order to permit the continuation of the family farm and small business, we urge the repeal of the federal estate tax. To encourage capital accumulation, we urge the permanent repeal of the capital gains tax. We urge congress to make the 2001 tax reductions permanent. To reduce "Pork Barrel" spending, we support the line item veto for the President.

We encourage individual responsibility for retirement needs, children's higher education and better health care for our citizens. We urge the expanded use of the deductions for individual retirement accounts, educational IRA's and medical savings accounts.

### ***State Government***

Any surplus state revenues above needed reserves should be returned immediately to each Nebraska taxpayer in the form of a direct refund. We believe in fairness and equity in taxation and believe a broad tax base with a minimum of exemptions will result in a lower tax rate. We support the repeal of the state inheritance tax.

We urge the continual review of all tax entities in local and state government with the objective of eliminating unnecessary taxation and urge all elected state officials to evaluate tax and spending policies to reduce property, sales and income tax.

We believe that gambling devastates the individual, the family and the community and therefore oppose any further gambling expansion in our state.

### **FLAG**

The ***WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY*** supports a Constitutional amendment to ban the desecration of the American flag. We believe the words "under god" shall forever remain in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **FOREIGN POLICY**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes foreign policy must have a reasonable relationship to our national interests, and should never compromise the defense or security of the United States. We believe that the spread of religious, economic and political freedoms are the best guarantee of peace. We do not support the use of food as a weapon in foreign policy.

### **HEALTH CARE**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes that all citizens should have access to necessary, quality and affordable health care, but that health care is not a "right" and it is not the government's job to provide or mandate it.

We believe that reimbursement to providers must be adequate so that necessary health care services are available to all Nebraskans. Such reimbursements must be at a level that ensures providers' uncompensated care costs are not shifted to other paying consumers.

We oppose any attempt to socialize or nationalize the American health care system. We believe it is unconstitutional for the government to 'force' citizens to buy health insurance (or any service or product for that matter).

We favor a tax policy that enhances the ability of individuals to purchase the health care of their choice. In order to give all citizens greater control over their health care options, we support measures such as medical savings accounts. We favor legislation to allow 100 percent deductibility for those who pay their own health insurance and long-term health care. We oppose employer mandates.

We support education to improve the health of Nebraskans. The right of individuals to be informed of possible exposure to health-harming elements must not be jeopardized by the legal basis of confidentiality.

We oppose taxpayer-funded abortion and contraceptive services or referrals by any official in a public school. These decisions properly belong with parents and guardians, and usurping this role undermines the integrity of the family.

We oppose taxpayer funding of any family planning programs that provide abortions or abortion referrals. We believe that all health care facilities, including abortion clinics, should be subject to the same state and federal regulations and inspections.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** reaffirms our commitment to the principle that all people have the inalienable right to human dignity and equal treatment under the law. We believe that the concept of equal rights and equal responsibilities under the law is basic to a free society. There should be no discrimination against anyone because he/she is physically or mentally challenged, or because of race, religion, color, creed, gender, age, marital status or national origin. We strongly support the elimination of all legal barriers to equality under the law and urge everyone to value and to treat all individuals equally.

We oppose efforts to extend protected class status to anyone based on sexual preference. We support equal pay for equal work and equal benefit plans for all people. We encourage employers to rededicate themselves to the concept of equal pay for equal work.

Mindful of our religious diversity, we reaffirm our commitment to the freedoms of religion and speech guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. We firmly support the rights of all citizens to openly practice the same, including the rights of individuals to engage in voluntary prayer in schools or in any other public institution.

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** emphasizes its belief in personal responsibility and limited government interference in the lives of our citizens.

We believe that life begins at conception and that all innocent human life is precious and should be protected. We support the reversal of Roe vs. Wade and an amendment to the United States Constitution banning abortions except those genuinely needed to save the life of the mother.

We endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to the unborn. We oppose using public revenues for abortion, and our Party will not fund organizations that advocate it. We oppose the introduction, testing or use of abortifacients.

We are strongly opposed to any form of euthanasia or assisted suicide, and we believe that the traditional criteria for death should be applied before organ harvesting is allowed. We believe that the individual should make decisions regarding the artificial maintenance of his or her life.

We believe that partial-birth abortion is tantamount to infanticide and should be banned across the nation. We oppose the use of human embryos or other fetal tissue from elective abortions for research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center or at any other research facility.

We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of mothers and offering adoption services. We reaffirm our support for appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

We support efforts to ban human cloning.

## IMMIGRATION

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** recognizes that our country is enriched with the vast influence of immigrants from all over the world who have come to the United States for the unlimited opportunities, freedom, and prosperity offered to every working citizen.

We support and welcome all legal immigrants and others who are here by due process and are productive, law-abiding citizens. We support increased federal and state efforts to stem the tide of illegal immigration. We do not support any form of amnesty for illegal immigrants. We do not support any financial assistance for illegal aliens.

### **OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** supports a Constitutional amendment and legislation establishing English as the official language of the United States.

### **PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** supports the Republican National Committee proposal for reorganizing the presidential primary system, which would encourage smaller states to hold their primary or caucus before the larger states. We also support Nebraska in joining 48 other states by returning to a "winner-take-all" format for allocating our five Electoral College votes for president. We support a closed primary system.

### **SENIOR AMERICANS**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** believes that our senior citizens deserve the opportunity to live their lives with dignity and with continued confidence in the integrity of the Social Security system. We believe that the solvency of Social Security must be a continuing concern of our elected officials, as should matters of intergenerational equity. We encourage privatization of Social Security.

Long-term health care is the greatest unmet essential need faced by older Americans. We encourage and support the private and charitable sectors' roles in assisting the elderly.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** believes that those who cannot provide for themselves should be **temporarily** assisted by both government and society, but that every effort should be made to help them become self-supporting, productive citizens with pride in their independence. Everyone has a personal responsibility to work to provide for themselves and their families, with the exception of children, veterans, retired seniors, and disabled persons.

### **STATE GOVERNMENT**

The **WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY** believes in a partisan legislature as an efficient and accountable branch of government. We support the public vote of our legislators for all legislative leadership posts.

#### ***Initiative Petition and Referendum***

We recognize the people of Nebraska as the "other house" of the Legislature. Initiative petition and referendum are the tools this "other house" uses to address its perceived needs or grievances.

We oppose any laws that would restrict or deny the use of initiative petition and referendum, such as those that would increase the number of signatures needed to propose constitutional amendments.

### **STATE COMMISSIONS**

We commend Governor Heineman for his leadership in reducing the number of commissions in state government and urge the continued review of all commissions with the objective of eliminating those with outdated, duplicative or unnecessary tasks.

### **VETERANS**

*The WASHINGTON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY* believes President Abraham Lincoln expressed it best when he stated that the obligation of our government was to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan." We believe this has been the "implied contract" between the federal government and its citizen soldiers since this nation was formed.

Recognizing the special sacrifices of those that are serving and have served in our nation's armed forces, we support reasonable compensation and state income tax exemption for the pay of Nebraska residents on active duty and for retirement benefits of veterans and their survivors. We also support legislation to end means testing related to veterans' benefits and federal policies granting veterans greater access to rightfully earned medical care, including efforts to privatize the operations of the Veteran's Administration.